

author: and, in the event of death occurring, he was either present at the examination, or inspected the diseased parts after their removal. Dr. Blakiston, therefore, holds himself responsible for the accuracy with which the cases have been observed, and the fidelity with which they have been reported.

The work is, therefore, to be received as a record of the personal experience of the author, rather than as a systematic treatise on the diseases which it embraces; and it is this feature which gives to it its chief value and authority.

The affections of the chest, to which the observations it records refer, are thoracic aneurism, chronic heart disease, circumscribed pleurisy, chronic pleurisy, plastic pneumonia, and phthisis pulmonalis. Upon the causes, symptoms, progress, diagnosis and treatment of each of which, the remarks of Dr. Blakiston will be found invariably interesting, and generally sound and instructive. The reader is notified in the preface that "there are certain views of treatment pervading these pages, which have resulted from the observation of disease in general, and of facts more numerous than those brought forward in this work." These relate to the substitution of mercury for venesection in acute inflammations, more especially those affecting serous and fibrous membranes, and to the employment of tonic in combination with sedative remedies in a large class of chronic disorders. Such views are not peculiar to the writer, but still, they are by no means universally adopted, or carried out in practice. As they are, in his case, principally founded on cases that have occurred in a populous manufacturing district, they may be considered, perhaps, as inapplicable to the inhabitants of other localities, where the nature of the employment and the surrounding atmosphere have a more invigorating effect on the constitution. A slight allowance, the author thinks, may possibly be required for this difference in circumstances; at the same time it must be borne in mind, he adds, "that many cases were observed among the higher classes, to whom this remark does not apply. Some old practitioners, of sound judgment, are of opinion that depletion can be less borne by persons in general at the present time than it could be forty or fifty years ago. There is probably some truth in this, for, in proportion as civilization advances, and commercial enterprise is extended, the mind is more exercised, and the nervous system more taxed, so that to a certain extent the constitution is thereby impaired and debilitated. Be this as it may, it will hardly be denied by any that venesection has been, and is still practised with too little caution and discrimination."

We cannot go to the full extent the author has in his opposition to venesection in the acute inflammatory diseases, for, however correct his remarks may be in reference to those diseases as they occur in the communities to which his practice was principally confined, they will not apply in all their force to the same class of diseases as they present themselves to the American practitioner. Nevertheless, many valuable practical hints may be derived from his exposition as well of the therapeutics as of the pathology of the several inflammatory and chronic affections of which he treats.

D. F. C.

ART. XVI.—*On the Blood and Urine.* By JOHN WILLIAM GRIFFITH, M. D., F. L. S., &c., G. OWEN REES, M. D., F. R. S., F. G. S., &c., and ALFRED MARKWICK, M. D., &c., in one volume—pp. 182, 165, 113–160. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1848.

THE three treatises, contained in the volume before us, form a valuable addition to our yet scanty stock of works upon the blood and urine. The authors, whose separate productions have been thus collated, are well known for their industrious researches in the field of humoral pathology, and their opinions and observations are entitled to our fullest confidence. If it had been consistent with justice to them, we could have desired that the results of their individual labours might have been condensed into a single essay; a complete treatise would thus have been formed, and the reader spared the fatiguing recurrence of many statements necessarily the same in separate works treating of one subject. Although each of these has merits peculiar to itself, to which we will hereafter advert, they all possess in common the excellence of being clear in language and concise in detail, and the more

intricate analytical processes are rendered intelligible to every one who is tolerably familiar with chemical manipulation. The professional chemist, as well as the student and practitioner of medicine, will find much in their pages worthy of his attention. They are, moreover, the most recent works that we possess upon medical chemistry, containing the latest additions which have been made in the science. There is hardly any branch of medical investigation which has received, of late, greater attention than this; it seems, too, to have taken at last the right direction in the subordination of premature theoretical application to a severe analysis of facts. As Dr. Griffith says, "To argue that such investigations are idle, merely because each new truth which is elicited is not immediately applicable to the elucidation of some point in the history of a disease, or to the improved application of remedial means for its alleviation, is as absurd as, unfortunately, it is frequent."

The first two of these manuals treat of the blood and urine; that by Dr. Griffith is a "Description of the general, chemical, and microscopical characters of the blood and secretions of the human body," &c.; that of Dr. Rees, is "On the analysis of the blood and urine in health and disease, and on the treatment of urinary diseases;" and the manual of Dr. Markwick is entitled, "A guide to the examination of the urine in health and disease, for the use of students." It will be seen from this, that there are certain differences in the plan laid down by each of these authors, in consequence of which a full consideration of the whole subject is secured. The first of the works in the foregoing order, contains certain microscopical details, which are not touched upon in either of those which follow. The proximate principles are described before the compound fluids which they constitute; after which, an analysis is given of the more important healthy and morbid secretions. Dr. Griffith furnishes us also with a process adapted to the analysis of any fluid that may be presented for examination. His work will be found extremely convenient for reference, as it contains a great deal of information in a condensed form. As an illustration of the fullness with which several subjects are considered, we would refer to the description of the bile (p. 137), in which its following constituents: the cholic, choleic, cholinic, choloidic, fellinic and bili-fellinic acids, besides biline, biliverdine, bilifulvine, taurine and dyslysine, are successively considered, and their chemical relations and physical properties enumerated.

The method to be pursued in making a quantitative analysis of the blood is given by Dr. Rees at some considerable length; it is not difficult, however, for the reader to follow this intricate process, step by step, as the description of it is conveyed in simple and unambiguous language. The mode recommended by him is that of Andral and Gavarret, with some few modifications, and is applicable before the coagulation of the blood. When this has taken place, Berzelius's method is to be employed. Both these and other processes are given in this work.

The analysis of the urine is exposed more thoroughly by Dr. Markwick than by either of the others, and contains, moreover, the later additions to the science not included by them. He also gives a greater variety of tests for the recognition of the elements of this secretion. A very useful tabular view of the abnormal ingredients of the urine is introduced, in which these are referred to their chemical and pathological causes as far as known. The more profound study of the organic products found in this fluid is furthered by a number of chemical formulæ exhibiting their composition.

It would be difficult to specify all the interesting matters contained in these manuals, without extending this notice beyond its proper limits: we would, however, in conclusion, draw attention to the very excellent observations of Dr. Rees upon the treatment of urinary deposits. The greater number of the cases of phosphatic deposits, in which the urine is at the same time alkaline, are referred by him to a tendency in the surface of the mucous membrane of the urinary tract to the production of an alkaline fluid. He supposes that in these cases, a urine, too acid in quality, is secreted and becomes alkaline only after leaving the kidneys, in consequence of the irritation it produces upon the mucous membrane. His treatment is in conformity with this pathological view, and cases are introduced by him exemptifying its correctness. He says, "It may appear somewhat unaccountable to those who merely look to the chemical view of the matter, that

any one should expect to render alkaline urine acid by the administration of alkalies, but such was the treatment I adopted, and the result fully corroborated the correctness of the theory which suggested it as a crucial test."

In order to exhibit the impropriety of making too hasty conclusions from chemical examination of the urine, he cites the supposition which has been entertained that cubeba and copaiba will produce aluminous urine, and affirms this opinion to be erroneous. Such urine, when tested with nitric acid, does, indeed, yield a precipitate greatly resembling albumen, but which is due to a vegetable matter contained in these drugs. As a proof of the correctness of this statement, he mentions that if the urine of patients treated with these remedies, be treated with ferrocyanide of potassium, after having been first acidulated with acetic acid, the vegetable matter will be but slightly affected, while the albumen, if present, would be at once precipitated. He also states that, after the test with nitric acid, albumen soon sinks to the bottom of the vessel, but the vegetable matter will not do so until the urine begins to be decomposed. There may be much truth in these statements, but we do not think they are entirely satisfactory, for albumen has certainly been detected in the urine, by very experienced chemists, after the employment of these irritating remedies.

It has also been stated, that the use of mercury renders the urine albuminous. Dr. Rees gives a table containing fifteen cases which tend to disprove this assertion. All of these fifteen patients were salivated with mercury, and albumen was not found in the urine of any. Dr. Rees relates a case showing the *disappearance* of albumen from the urine in a case of Bright's disease, after the salivation of the patient.

To show the evil of relying solely upon the application of heat, as a test of the presence of albumen, Dr. Rees introduces a table, containing 482 cases taken promiscuously from the hospital wards, in 34 of which upon the application of heat to the urine there was a deposit resembling albumen, but consisting of the earthy phosphates. Thus seven per cent. of the whole number of cases might, by some persons, have been considered cases of albuminuria. "A little knowledge is indeed a dangerous thing," in hasty and over-zealous hands. We can sincerely commend these manuals to all desirous of information upon a subject of growing interest and importance; they can find it certainly nowhere more clearly and concisely exposed than here. We regret to note, in a work otherwise so well got up, a number of gross errors in typography, which in a reprint are hardly excusable.

M. S.

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ARR. XVII.—*Anniversary Discourse before the New York Academy of Medicine.* November 10th, 1847. By JOHN W. FRANCIS, M.D. Published by order of the Academy. New York: 1847. 8vo. pp. 112.

WE have read with much gratification the discourse of Dr. Francis, as a well-timed, high-toned, and sensible appeal to the profession upon topics in which they are deeply interested: opening with a rapid survey of some of the striking peculiarities of the age, which render the first fifty years of the century the most remarkable connected with the history of man, Dr. F. observes, that a "remarkable characteristic of our Republic" is the principle of *association*, which is so powerful an agent whether for good or evil, and of which the advantages have been chiefly felt in its application "to self improvement and the augmentation of knowledge, to eleemosynary and charitable designs, and to fiscal experiments." It is under the first of these heads that the institution whose members he was addressing, was placed—an institution, resulting from the wants of the profession itself, and the community at large.

"An Academy of Medicine in this city (New York) was a moral necessity; it was demanded by the daily increasing perversion of a noble science, by the sullied dignity of an honourable vocation, by the predominance of evils of saddest issue, and by the long-neglected claims of injured humanity. This language cannot, I apprehend, be deemed too forcible, when contemplating the condition of practical medicine, in this our own day and generation. Yes, the venerable art